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SUBJECT: THE APCLS: THE HUNDE MILITARY FORCE

A Short APCLS Primer

¶1. (SBU) Members of the APCLS (Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo) come almost exclusively from the Hunde ethnic group. Hundes comprise about 5% of North Kivu's population and are concentrated in Masisi Territory, where the group historically controlled the land through its traditional chiefs. In recent months, the APCLS appears to have attracted increasing numbers of non-Hunde recruits, primarily non-Rwandophones, but also some Hutus. Visitors to APCLS-controlled areas report that the group maintains excellent relations with the locals, who view them as a protection force.

¶2. (SBU) APCLS's expressed objective is to protect Hunde and other Congolese citizens, i.e., non-Tutsis, in its area of operations. It was formed in 2006 as part of PARECO, but split from the group in January 2008 when it refused to sign the Goma Accords -- the only major armed group that refused to do so. It claims about 1,500 fighters, organized into four brigades; MONUC estimates have been as high as 2,500; we believe its forces could number between 500-800. Its troops appear to be reasonably well armed with assault rifles, light mortars, and a few machine guns and RPGs.

¶3. (SBU) Sources have told us that decision making within the APCLS is highly centralized around the group's leader, "General" Janvier. All but one of the senior leadership is Hunde and most have spent time in the FARDC.

How APCLS Makes Money

¶4. (SBU) APCLS receives revenue from the small gold and cassiterite mines in its operating areas. However, some sources estimate that the primary source of funding for the APCLS is support -- money and weapons -- from wealthy Hunde politicians, landowners, and businessman. One of the most commonly mentioned probable supporters is North Kivu Vice-Governor Lutaichirwa Feller. Similar to most rebel groups, the APCLS also taxes locals, primarily as the population transports produce and goods between villages.

APCLS-FDLR Collaboration

¶5. (SBU) The APCLS coordinates its activities with the FDLR. It is not clear whether the FDLR supplies the APCLS with weapons, munitions, or training, or whether there is joint planning. Most observers believe the collaboration is generally ad hoc, with both groups sensitive to retain their separate identities. However, they both recognize that they share a common enemy, the FARDC. Janvier, according to several of our sources, does not view MONUC as neutral, but as fighting in support of a CNDP takeover of the area.

Comment

¶16. (SBU) The APCLS is likely to remain an irritant in Masisi for the foreseeable future. It will continue to act as a force to protect the Hunde community from real and perceived threats from the Rwandophone agenda. It has undoubtedly become more intractable in its opposition to any participation in the peace process, as reports of FARDC human rights violations in its area of operation have surfaced. However, its ability to disrupt and combat FARDC/MONUC forces will be limited; the real danger lies with a more systematic cooperation amongst the APCLS, FDLR, and disgruntled Mai Mai forces.

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